

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 897
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 5793

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, PK
SUBJECT: TALK WITH FOREIGN MINISTER: DPSA, PAKISTAN RELATIONS,
TRAVEL PLANS

1. AT A PAKISTAN EMBASSY RECEPTION FOR AGHA SHAHI WEDNESDAY EVENING, I HAD ABOUT 10 MINUTES OF PRIVATE AND UNINTERRUPTED TALK WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER. IN THE COURSE OF THIS CONVERSATION, VAJPAYEE RAISED THE SUBJECT OF THE DPSA, RECOGNIZED OUR CONCERN, AND SAID IT WAS A TROUBLESOME ISSUE. WHEN I ASKED WHEN A CABINET DECISION MIGHT BE EXPECTED, HE REPLIED THAT THE CABINET WAS "CONSIDERING MANY OPTIONS" AND WAS "IN NO HURRY TO MAKE A DECISION". WHEN I ASKED IF THAT MEANT THE DECISION MIGHT STILL BE PENDING WHEN THE PRIME MINISTER VISITS WASHINGTON, HE REPLIED AFFIRMATIVELY. TO MAKE SURE THAT I HAD HEARD HIM CORRECTLY, I REPEATED THE QUESTION, AND HE SAID, "YES, PENDING".

2. COMMENT: THIS POSSIBLE STRETCH-OUT IN THE DECISION IS QUITE OUT OF LINE WITH THE EXPECTATION OF OUR BRITISH AND FRENCH COLLEAGUES HERE. IT MAY REFLECT DIFFERENCES OF OPINIONS IN THE POLITICAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF THE CABINET COMPRISING THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE MINISTERS OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, HOME AFFAIRS, DEFENSE, AND FINANCE. HOWEVER, THE DISPOSITION TO POSTPONE A DECISION IS AS
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LIKELY TO BE BASED ON INTERNAL POLITICAL RIVALRIES, DIFFERENCES OVER FINANCIAL PRIORITIES, AND THE ABSENCE OF ANY GREAT SENSE OF URGENCY, AS ON FOREIGN POLICY CONSIDERATIONS.

3. ON INDO-PAKISTAN RELATIONS, VAJPAYEE SAID THAT HE HAD FOUND GENERAL ZIA TO BE A REALIST, THAT HE FELT

THAT GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT UNDERSTANDING WAS ON A FAIRLY GOOD BASIS AS A RESULT OF THIS EXCHANGE OF VISITS. HE ALSO EXPRESSED, HOWEVER, DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THE PAKISTANIS WERE DRAGGING THEIR FEET ON TRANSIT QUESTIONS, AND SAID THAT AMONG PAKISTANIS GENERALLY THERE CONTINUES TO BE MUCH SUSPICION AND ANTAGONISM TOWARD INDIA. TO ISSUSTRATE THE LATTER, HE ALLEGED THAT EVERY PAKISTANI SOLDIER IS REQUIRED EACH YEAR TO RENEW AN OATH THAT HE WILL HELP AVENGE PAKISTAN'S 1971 DEFEAT BY INDIA. WHEN I EXPRESSED SOME INCREDULITY ABOUT THAT, HE MAINTAINED IT TO BE A FACT.

4. VAJPAYEE ALSO SAID THAT HE KNOWS FOR A FACT THAT THERE WAS A SECRET AGREEMENT BETWEEN MRS. GANDHI AND BHUTTO. MRS. GANDHI, HE SAID, WILL KEEP ON DENYING THIS (AS IN FACT SHE DID AGAIN APRIL 12 IN A SPEECH IN LUDHIANA), BUT HE, VAJPAYEE, IS CONFIDENT OF HIS FACTS. PERHAPS I SHOULD HAVE PROBED FOR THE NATURE OF HIS EVIDENCE, BUT AT THE TIME IT SEEMED IMPOLITIC TO DO SO.

5. VAJPAYEE EXPECTS TO GO TO THE UN LATER THIS MONTH AND SPEAK IN THE UN SESSION ON NAMIBIA. HE PROBABLY WILL GO TO THE UN AGAIN IN MAY IN TIME FOR THE START OF THE SSOD AND STAY ON TO TAKE PART IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO THE STATES.
GOHEEN

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